

midnight in Newark

Ed Jurist
467 Belmont Ave
Bi 3-3011

Edith Taylor
"Bob Holmes"
2 Sherman place.

"IT'S MIDNIGHT OVER NEWARK"

A Living Newspaper

In

Two Parts

by

Hughes Allison

Kay Huger
21 Madison
7 Maplewood
502-8481

True Green
119 Brown St
Apr 18.

CHARACTERS

LOUDSPEAKER
 1 GIRL * Norma Nelson
 HUSBAND
 WIFE * Bertell -
 1 BOY
 MALE NEGRO
 3 1ST MINISTER Holmes
 4 BOOTBLACK Wilson
 5 RED CAP Woodruff
 6 1ST PORTER Tate — 3
 7 2ND PORTER
 8 MANDY — D. Horney
 9 A GIRL — Maud Mills
 10 ANOTHER GIRL Jane Green
 11 DOCTOR A Scott
 1ST YOUNG LADY
 2ND YOUNG LADY
 3RD YOUNG LADY
 12 WOMAN * North
 13 DOCTOR B * Corman
 14 SECRETARY OF URBAN LEAGUE
 15 COMMISSIONER * Corman
 16 DOCTOR C * Callan
 17 DOCTOR D * Kuehner
 18 DOCTOR E * Bertell
 19 LAWYER Woodruff
 20 DOCTOR F
 21 MEDICAL DIRECTOR * Green

Norma Nelson
 Jane Green
 Maud Mills
 Corman
 Wilson
 John Callan

Ken Woodruff
 139 South Street
 Orange, N.J.
 OR 3-8479
 any time before 7 P.M.
 after 7 P.M. OR 2-0756

DANCERS, MEMBERS OF CONGREGATION, EPISCOPAL
PROCESSIONALISTS, YOUNG LADIES*

(*) DENOTES WHITE CHARACTERS.

Richard Courtney 26 Parker Avenue, Maplewood
 Cronkrite 50 Orange 2-5117

Bill Swale
 Arlington Street

Holmes

Maud Mills
 17 Cranford St
 Newark

S O U R C E M A T E R I A L

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by

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by

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(An Open Letter to the Hospital Boards and White Practitioners of Essex County.)

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(Created by the Legislature of the State of New Jersey, June 1940)

SECTION II--EMPLOYMENT

SECTION IV--HOUSING

SECTION V--HEALTH AND HOSPITALIZATION

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"HOSPITALS"

by

The New Jersey Writers' Project
(State Of New Jersey, 1941)

NEWSPAPERS:

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INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED

Dr. Thomas Bell, Dr. Mae McCarrol, Mr. Harold Lett, Mrs. William Milwitsky, Dr. James E. Lee, Dr. L. B. Ellerson, Dr. Snaveley.

FILES AND LETTERS

Library of Dr. Thomas Bell; Files of the New Jersey Urban League; files of the Inter-racial Council of Newark, N. J.

(TRANSCRIPT OF BEAUTICIANS' MEETING
AT MRS. STEWART'S HOME SUPPLIED BY
PRIVATE STENOGRAPHER)

Seaborn Hordern
196 West Kinney St.
Newark, N. J.

Fried Washington

Service Bell
448 St. Nicholas Ave
New York, N. Y.

IT'S MIDNIGHT OVER NEWARK

Part One

"IT'S MIDNIGHT OVER NEWARK"

Part One

(THE HOUSE LIGHTS FADE. THE FOOT-
LIGHTS GO UP. MUSIC SUDDENLY ENDS
ON A SOUR NOTE.)

SOUND

A DEEP BASE CYMBAL STRUCK BY HAMMER TWELVE TIMES.

LOUDSPEAKER

Attention, please! Attention, please! Attention,
please! There is a question to be answered. There
is a question to be answered. And what is that
question? (LAUGHS) Simply this: What is a Negro?
What is a Negro?

GIRL

(SHE IS WHITE AND SITS OUT FRONT NEAR FOOTLIGHTS
DOWN RIGHT) Who wants to know?

LOUDSPEAKER

Attention, please! Attention, please! What is a
Negro? What is a Negro?

(AS GIRL SPEAKS HER FIRST LINE, A
NEGRO COUPLE COMES DOWN AISLE AND
FACES AUDIENCE SEATED IN THE CEN-
TER AISLE. COUPLE STANDS BETWEEN
AUDIENCE AND FOOTLIGHTS.)

HUSBAND

(SPEAKING TO WIFE BUT IN A VOICE ENTIRE AUDIENCE
CAN HEAR) I thought we were going to a show!

WIFE

Go on and find the seat!

LOUDSPEAKER

That question has still to be answered. What is
a Negro?

HUSBAND

Let's go home, honey. That's one of them old
questions....like: "Which come first--the chicken
or the egg?"

WIFE Hush up!, and find the seat!

LOUDSPEAKER What is a Negro?

GIRL Whoever you are!, do you have to know?

BOY (HE IS WHITE AND SITS OUT FRONT NEAR FOOTLIGHTS DOWN LEFT) Yeah! Do you have to know?!

HUSBAND (TO WIFE) Looks like we're in the middle around here! Let's be moving.

WIFE We're always in the middle.

(NEGRO COUPLE CROSSES TO AISLE AND ARE TAKEN IN HAND BY AN USHER)

LOUDSPEAKER What is a Negro?

GIRL (RISES FROM SEAT AND STEPS INTO AISLE) Hasn't this gone far enough?

BOY (RISES FROM SEAT AND STEPS INTO AISLE) Yeah! How about it?

LOUDSPEAKER Madam, are you a Negro?

GIRL (INDIGNANT) I beg your pardon!

LOUDSPEAKER (TO BOY) Are you a Negro, sir?

BOY (INDIGNANT) Certainly not!

LOUDSPEAKER Sorry.

BOY I ain't!

GIRL Neither one of us are Negroes. Negroes are black.

BOY Sure! Negroes are black!

LOUDSPEAKER Well! Fine! Fine! Suppose we follow this through.

GIRL How's that!

BOY Huh?

LOUDSPEAKER I said, won't you step up on the stage?

GIRL (DOWN RIGHT MOUNTS STEPS TO STAGE, HER FINGERS PATTING HER CLOTHING AND HAIR, GAZING SHYLY BACK

5

GIRL
(CONT'D)
LOUDSPEAKER AT AUDIENCE) Oh, dear, dear, dear!

LOUDSPEAKER That's it. Right up there. (TO BOY) And you, sir? Won't you step up on the stage?

BOY (MOUNTING STEPS TO STAGE) Why not? I did it once before on Bank Night. Got a set of dishes too!

LOUDSPEAKER (AS FOOTLIGHTS DIM) Now you were saying Negroes are black.

GIRL That's right.

BOY (AS ALL LIGHTS GO OUT) (HE IS ON STAGE DOWN LEFT HAVING COME UP AT THAT POINT) That's what we said!

LOUDSPEAKER (AS CURTAIN GOES UP IN UTTER DARKNESS) I see!

(CURTAIN UP: NO LIGHT)

BOY We don't!

GIRL (TIMIDLY) How about a little light?

LOUDSPEAKER Very well. (CALLING) A little light!

(A SPOT OVERHEAD AND DEAD CENTER
FADES IN A TALL, SPLENDID SPECI-
MEN OF A MALE NEGRO, NAKED EXCEPT
FOR A WHITE LOINCLOTH. THE STAGE
IS BARE OF SET OR PROPS. THE BACK-
DROPS AND DRAPES ARE BLACK)

GIRL (UTTERS A GASP OF SURPRISE) Oh!

BOY Who is it? Joe Louis?

LOUDSPEAKER Don't be frightened.

BOY Wait a minute! If that's Joe Louis, where do I go from here?

LOUDSPEAKER There's a long list of gentlemen you might consult about that. (CHANGE OF TONE) But observe! The figure with you on the stage is black, except for the bit of cloth it wears. Is the figure a Negro?

BOY (TO GIRL) What do you think, sister?

GIRL Could be!

LOUDSPEAKER Ask the figure to walk.

BOY (TO NEGRO) Hey you! Let's see you walk.

(NEGRO WALKS SLOWLY OFF LEFT TO WING.)

GIRL (AS NEGRO GOES OFF) Say! All this doesn't quite answer the question. (SHE CROSSES INTO POOL OF LIGHT DEAD CENTER)

BOY (CROSSING TO GIRL IN LIGHT) Naw! Negroes are.... well....sort of.... (FALTERS AND CAN'T GO ON)

GIRL Alright, smarty. Go on. We're waiting.

BOY The name isn't Smarty. It's Smith. John Smith. I didn't catch yours?

GIRL I didn't throw it! (GIGGLES)

BOY That's funny I suppose!

GIRL Well it's the best I can do....on such short notice.

BOY The name, sister! The handle! What's your moniker?

GIRL (RASING EYEBROWS) An uncouth person to say the least!

LOUDSPEAKER Any name will do, madam.

GIRL It's *Jones*. Mary *Jones*.

BOY Miss? Or Mrs?

LOUDSPEAKER I'll bet that matters.

GIRL Miss, if you please.

BOY Now, that's more like it! We're all cosy and everything.

GIRL I'm not so sure. Perhaps I'd better go back to my....(TAKES A STEP DOWN STAGE)

LOUDSPEAKER Have you forgotten?

BOY About Negroes? Couldn't we?

LOUDSPEAKER Forget about Negroes? Well, it's being done. Especially in Newark.

GIRL Oh, I don't know about that. They seem to be.... well.... Negroes are....are such happy people.

BOY Sure! That's it! That's it! Negroes are happy-go-lucky people.

GIRL (SMILING) Aren't they!

LOUDSPEAKER And what do these happy people do?

GIRL Well, for one thing: they dance. (AS IF TO CONVINCE HERSELF) Yes, that's one thing they do.

(FADE IN MUSIC: A PHONOGRAPH RECORD: DUKE ELLINGTON'S "IN A MELLOPHONE" OR SOME OTHER RECORD IF MORE APPROPRIATE)

LOUDSPEAKER (AS LIGHTS ON STAGE GO UP) Like this?

(THREE COUPLES ENTER FROM THE LEFT; THREE COUPLES ENTER FROM THE RIGHT. THEY DO AN EXHIBITION LINDY HOP WHICH LASTS ABOUT THREE MINUTES, WHIRLING ABOUT BOY AND GIRL STANDING CENTER. AS THE DANCERS EXIT, THE LIGHTS ON STAGE FADE AND SPOT OVER BOY AND GIRL FADES IN)

GIRL (PATTING HER HANDS IN TIME WITH THE MUSIC WHICH IS NO LONGER HEARD) And more of the same. (TO BOY) I just love to see Negroes dance. They're so primitive about it. Don't you think so?

BOY Well, they're primitive people. Everybody knows that.

LOUDSPEAKER Did I hear you call them....people?

BOY Yes. Aren't they?

LOUDSPEAKER I'm asking you.

GIRL Well, once upon a time there was a question about their being people. But there isn't any more.

LOUDSPEAKER As far as you know?

BOY Maybe, ^{you,} whoever you are, can tell us differently!

LOUDSPEAKER Perhaps I know of folks who question the right of Negroes to call themselves people.

BOY Not in this country! (TO GIRL) And while I'm about it, Miss er....er....

GIRL Jones. Mary Jones.

BOY Sorry. Miss Jones then. While I'm about it, let me tell you this: Negroes....not all of 'em anyhow....don't just go around dancing!

GIRL Of course not! Who said they did?

BOY We had a colored cook once. Mandy was her name. And she was one of the most religious persons I've ever met.

LOUDSPEAKER So Negroes are religious?

BOY Exactly! Once I went to Mandy's church. Of course the service in Mandy's church was a little different from the service in our church.

LOUDSPEAKER Our church?

BOY Mandy's was a colored church with a colored minister.

LOUDSPEAKER And yours was a white church.

(FADE OUT SPOT OVER BOY AND GIRL)

BOY (AS LIGHT FADES) Yes. What do you think I am?

LOUDSPEAKER (AS LIGHT FADES) You might be an American. Are you?

BOY (AS LIGHT FADES) One hundred per-cent!

GIRL (IN DARK NOW) What's the matter with the light?!

(IN THE DARK BOY AND GIRL CROSS DOWN STAGE LEFT.)

LOUDSPEAKER (IN DARK) Don't be alarmed. Everything's all right
(CHANGE OF TONE) Now, Mr. Smith?

BOY (IN DARK) Yes?

LOUDSPEAKER (IN DARK) About Mandy's church. Was it like this?

(FADE IN RIGHT: NEGRO CONGREGATION OF THE USUAL LOWER CLASS TYPE WITH JACKLEG MINISTER STANDING IN PULPIT)

BOY (AS LIGHT BEGINS TO SPOT CONGREGATION AND MINISTER
Like what?

LOUDSPEAKER This!

(CONGREGATION BEGINS TO MOAN AND CHANT)

1ST MINISTER The devil is loose in the world. And he's been running 'round free a long time.

CONGREGATION (AD LIBS) "Too long!"

1ST MINISTER Looks to me like dey's mighty few folks trying to catch him dees days. And I'm talking 'bout the devil!

CONGREGATION (AD LIBS) "Ain't it de truth!" "Talk on, brother!"

1ST MINISTER Oooh! And from what I been seeing 'round here.... it looks like the devil done caught the folks!

CONGREGATION (AD LIBS) "Dat sho is the truth!" "Preach it!"

1ST MINISTER Is he done caught you, brother? Is he done caught you, sister?

CONGREGATION (AD LIBS) "Lawd hep us!" "Lawd hep us!"

1ST MINISTER And if the devil is done caught you....dey ain't but one way for you to git rid of him! Do you hear me!

CONGREGATION (AD LIBS) "We hear you!" "Hep us Lawd!"

1ST MINISTER I said dey ain't but one way to git rid of the devil! And dat's for you to walk in the way of righteousness....wid me!

CONGREGATION (AD LIBS) "Amen! Amen!" "Tell 'em, brother!"

1ST MINISTER You-all going to walk wid me?!

CONGREGATION (AD LIBS) (IN A FIT OF UNINHIBITED EMOTION) "Yes, brother!" "We's going to walk wid you!" "Certainly, Lawd!"

1ST MINISTER Den walk wid me, chillun! Walk wid me! And bye and bye....we'll all go to heaven! (HE COMES DOWN IN FRONT OF PULPIT AND HOLDS OUT A COLLECTION PLATE) I said: walk wid me and we'd all go to heaven....bye and bye.

(CONGREGATION BREAKS INTO SONG, SINGING THE SPIRITUAL, "BYE AND BYE"; MEANWHILE CIRCLING BEFORE THE MINISTER AND DROPPING COINS INTO HIS COLLECTION PLATE)

(LIGHT RIGHT FADES)

LOUDSPEAKER Was that anything like Mandy's church, Mr. Smith?

(FADE IN LIGHT SPOTTING BOY AND GIRL DOWN STAGE LEFT)

BOY That was exactly like Mandy's church.

GIRL (SURPRISED) Are you sure?

BOY Sure? Of course I'm sure.

GIRL (SHRUGS SHOULDERS) At least the music was nice.
But the rest of it!

LOUDSPEAKER What was the matter with the rest of it, Miss. Jones?

GIRL (TO BOY) Wouldn't you say it was....primitive?

BOY Well, Negroes are primitive people.

GIRL But they've had a chance by this time to do better than that.

BOY You saw for yourself!

LOUDSPEAKER She saw the kind of religious service you had seen Negroes indulge in.

BOY That's the way Negroes are! Ignorant! Dumb! Stupid! (SNORTS) Lincoln made a mistake when he freed 'em!

GIRL I'm not so sure about that!

BOY I am!

LOUDSPEAKER Aren't you a little mixed up?

BOY (TO GIRL) That voice is butting in again. (TO LLOUDSPEAKER) What do you mean by I'm mixed up?

LOUDSPEAKER A little while ago you called Negroes people.

BOY Brother!, there're people and people. (CHANGE OF TONE) All right! You asked for it! I don't know your reason. But you want to know what a Negro is. Well, there was Mandy's little boy.

LOUDSPEAKER A bootblack, like this. Wasn't he?

BOOTBLACK (COMING INTO SPOT WITH BOY AND GIRL MAKING HIS ENTRANCE FROM DOWN LEFT) Shine, sir?

BOY Yeah! Shine 'em up, Sambo!

BOOTBLACK (PUTS SHINE-BOX AT BOY'S FEET; KNEELS AND BEGINS TO SHINE SHOES) My name ain't Sambo, mister.

BOY I thought all little colored boys were named Sambo!

BOOTBLACK I ain't named that.

BOY You trying to be smart, son?

BOOTBLACK No sir.

BOY Then why don't you shut up and shine my shoes?

BOOTBLACK Yes sir. But you called me Sambo. And that ain't my name.

BOY Well! Who wants to know your name?

BOOTBLACK I was thinking maybe you did.

BOY Why?

BOOTBLACK You called me Sambo, didn't you? How come you to call me that?

BOY I thought all little colored boys were named Sambo. That's why! (HARSH) And listen, nigger! How often do you go around talking back to white people? (PAUSE) Talk back to your teacher?

BOOTBLACK Sometimes.

BOY Oh, you do! Well, you'll never get anywhere talking back! You know that don't you?

BOOTBLACK I'm learning.

BOY What do you want to be when you grow up?

BOOTBLACK What do you do for a living?

BOY I'm a book-keeper.

BOOTBLACK You make much money?

BOY That's none of your business!

BOOTBLACK I figured it wouldn't be.

BOY That'll be enough out of you, Sambo. Now take your box and scam!

BOOTBLACK (RISING AND TAKING BOX BY ITS STRAP) You going to pay me?

BOY For what! Talking back to me?

BOOTBLACK You ain't going to pay me then!

BOY Get out of here, you little rat!

BOOTBLACK Sure! (SNATCHES GIRL'S HANDBAG AND RUNS OFF RIGHT)

GIRL (SCREAMS) Stop that thief! Stop that thief!

BOY Never mind! Never mind! We'll get him!

GIRL But my handbag! My pocket-book!

BOY You'll see! We'll get the little black rat!

LOUDSPEAKER Now we're getting somewhere! Negroes are black. They're happy people because they like to dance. They're very religious. And they're little black thieves. (CHANGE OF TONE) What else are they? This?

RED CAP (ENTERING FROM THE LEFT) Carry your bags, sir? Carry your bags, sir? Carry your bags, sir? (EXITS RIGHT)

1ST PORTER (ENTERING FROM THE LEFT CARRYING A MOP WHICH HE USES ON FLOOR AT FEET OF BOY AND GIRL) Excuse me, please. Just watch your feet, please. Thank you, sir. (EXITS RIGHT)

2ND PORTER (ENTERS FROM THE LEFT; WEARS WHITE COAT AND CARRIES SOAP AND TOWEL AND WHISKBROOM) Brush you off, sir? (BRUSHES OFF BOY FURIOUSLY WITH WHISKBROOM) Soap and towel, sir?

BOY No. I don't need soap and a towel. Just brush me off good.

2nd PORTER (BRUSHING AWAY FURIOUSLY) Yes sir! Yes sir!
(PUTS SOAP IN POCKET; THROWS TOWEL OVER SHOULDER; HOLDS OUT ONE HAND WHILE BRUSHING AWAY WITH THE OTHER HAND) Fine day, ain't it?

BOY Why? Because you've got one hand stuck out, palm up?

2ND PORTER (CHUCKLING) Well, you know how it is! The old washroom man's got to live!

BOY Couldn't you do something to make a better living?

2ND PORTER Take any job you gimme, mister!

BOY I haven't got a job to give you.

2ND PORTER Maybe there's a job for me where you work?

BOY My firm doesn't employ colored folks.

2ND PORTER And that's that! (EXITS RIGHT)

LOUDSPEAKER Mr. Smith and Miss. Jones: you've made several observations concerning Negroes. Before we move on, let's sum up a bit. Do you mind?

GIRL No. Go right ahead.

LOUDSPEAKER Very well. First, you said Negroes were black. Then, they're happy people because they like to dance. They're also very religious. They talk back to white people. They steal. They shine shoes, carry your traveling bags, and brush your clothing off in washrooms. What else do you know about them?

GIRL They must undoubtedly live horribly!

LOUDSPEAKER Do you mean the ones we have already seen?

BOY What do you mean by the ones we have already seen?
All Negroes are alike! And they all live alike!

LOUDSPEAKER How do you know, Mr. Smith?

BOY I had a look at the way Mandy lived. That's how
I know.

LOUDSPEAKER Mandy was once your cook, wasn't she? And did she
live like this?

(MUSIC IS IN LOUD)

(FADE LIGHT SPOTTING BOY AND GIRL
DOWN LEFT)

(FADE IN LIGHT UP RIGHT DISCLOSING
THE USUAL MISERABLE, OVERCROWDED
ROOM IN THE NEGRO QUARTER OF THE
CITY. THE BOUNDARIES OF THE INTER-
IOR ARE MERELY INDICATED. BUT THE
CHEAP, WORNOUT FURNITURE IS VERY
MUCH THERE INCLUDING A BED, TWO OR
THREE BROKEN DOWN STRAIGHT BACK
CHAIRS, A TABLE AND A BOX)

(AS LIGHT FADES IN WE SEE MANDY,
THE BOOTBLACK, 1ST PORTER, 2ND
PORTER, RED CAP, A GIRL, ANOTHER
GIRL.)

(FREEZE CHARACTERS UNTIL MUSIC IS
OUT.)

MANDY (TO BOOTBLACK) Lawd, have mercy! What's happened
to you?! How come you got to be stealing?

BOOTBLACK You got to steal!

MANDY Dat's something nobody's got to do!

BOOTBLACK I done it! I done it before. I'm going to do it
again!

MANDY My Lawd! I been trying to bring you up like a
Christian. But now you act and talk like a heathen.
I ought to break your little neck!

RED CAP What you mean, Ma, is: you should never have had him. You should never have had none of us.

MANDY (TO RED CAP) What you saying to me? What you telling me? Ain't I a woman? Ain't I got a right to be a mother?

(1ST MINISTER ENTERS FROM RIGHT WING.)

RED CAP Ma, you might have a right to do and be anythingif you wasn't black.

MANDY (TO MINISTER) Thank the lawd you done come, Reverend!

1ST MINISTER What's wrong, sister?

MANDY So much I don't know where to start.

A GIRL Ma! I got to lay down now. I got to!

MANDY (TO A GIRL) You feeling worse, honey? (TO THE MEN) Hep her on the bed, you-all.

1ST PORTER Yes'm. Come on, you-all.

(1ST PORTER AND 2ND PORTER HELP A GIRL TO BED.)

1ST MINISTER Is she sick agin?

A GIRL I'm bad off sick, Reverend. I'm bad off sick.

MANDY (TO MINISTER) And dat's my best child too. (GESTURING AT BOOTBLACK) She ain't like dis one here. Dat boy is on his way to jail!

1ST MINISTER One thing at a time, sister. One piece of trouble at a time. Your daughter is sick and your littlest son is done what?

RED CAP Reverend, you ought to know by now....that trouble don't come to folks like us a piece at a time!

1ST PORTER That sho is right! Trouble don't trickle down on us. It pours down like that flood you preach about. Only we ain't got no Ark!

RED CAP No! We ain't got no Ark to ride out this flood. And Reverend, you ain't breaking your back to git us one either!

1ST MINISTER I come here to hep you-all!

ANOTHER GIRL Is that so! Well, I'm going to tell you, Ma, and all the rest of you....we need more than prayer.

MANDY Don't pay her no mind, Reverend. Don't pay none of 'em no mind. Just hep us!

1ST MINISTER Certainly, sister. But we got to all cool down. Now what about your little boy? What's he done?

MANDY He done snatched a white woman's pocket-book.

1ST MINISTER (TO BOOTBLACK) Why'd you do that, son? Don't you know that's wrong?

MANDY I work and struggle to provide dis boy wid a home. And den he go and disgrace me.

BOOTBLACK I ain't going to be like the rest of you-all! I ain't going to just take it and bow down!

1ST MINISTER What do you mean, son?

BOOTBLACK You know what I mean!

ANOTHER GIRL Yeah! You know what he means allright! (CHANGE OF TONE) Ma say she works and struggles to give him a home. And what kind of home is it? I don't blame that kid for stealing. The only mistake he made is: he got caught.

MANDY And they going to catch you too.

ANOTHER GIRL Well they ain't caught me yet! And another thing,
I ain't in the bed like her....sick!

MANDY (VICIOUSLY) Oh you're sick alright. You're walkin
sickness!

ANOTHER GIRL And I'm walking wid it in the right places too!

RED CAP (TO ANOTHER GIRL) Shut up! You got a crazy mind.

ANOTHER GIRL Yeah! And I'm just crazy enough to tell the truth
You want to hear it?!

BOOTBLACK Tell 'em, sis! Tell 'em like you told me! Tell 'em

ANOTHER GIRL Allright listen to me! I got a story to tell. And
it's^a story that'll make your brain buzz and your
stomach turn over. And when I'm through telling
it, Reverend, and you know something to do....you'd
better do it quick.

BOOTBLACK Tell 'em, sis!

ANOTHER GIRL This story starts off down South.

RED CAP I can tell that part of it! Pa dies. And Ma gets
insurance money.

1ST PORTER And then she says to us: "Chillun! This is the
South. A colored person ain't got a chance here.
They got us down. And they going to keep us down!"

ANOTHER GIRL With a rope and a gun and even the law.

MANDY So I said: "Chillun! Freedom and Democracy don't
start in America until you git above Washington,
D. C. Way above Washington!"

ANOTHER GIRL Ma says: "Let's go to Newark. We can really live
there!"

RED CAP

Ma said: "We can all live in Newark and be decent citizens. People will treat you like you was real human beings"

MANDY

I said: "Chillun, you can live in peace and walk with dignity in Newark. Us grown-ups can work. And your little brother can go to school"

ANOTHER GIRL

So we come to Newark.

BOOTBLACK

I started going to school.

RED CAP

I looked for a job.

1ST PORTER

We all looked for jobs.

ANOTHER GIRL

Yeah! We looked for jobs.

RED CAP

I was trained and ready to go to work as an automobile mechanic.

ANOTHER GIRL

Yeah! But look at you now! (LAUGHS) Look at all of us! Me? I had to make myself a job. It's out in the streets when it gits dark in Newark.

RED CAP

All of us is working. And working hard. And all of us together don't make enough to pay rent and buy food.

1ST PORTER

So we just pay the rent.

RED CAP

And eat now and then.

BOOTBLACK

(LAUGHS) I got myself a belly full directly after I snatched that white woman's pocketbook! Yeah!

RED CAP

(GESTURES AROUND) Look where we living! Look how we living! Ten families in this one old rat trap. And there ain't but one toilet!

ANOTHER GIRL

And it's out on the back porch.

BOOTBLACK

When I went to the school, about all the children in it was black like me. But there wasn't but one black teacher there. And them white ones! (SHORTS) The first day, I heard the teacher I had say to another one: "I got another one of the little black apes in my classroom!" And every time she turns her eyes on me, she makes me feel like I was a animal. So I'm gonna be a animal!

MANDY

God in heaven! Don't let my child talk like that!

BOOTBLACK

Yeah! I'm gonna be a animal!

MANDY

Oh Lord, have mercy on us! What's happened to dis family?

RED CAP

Ma, what's happened to us ain't no different than what's happened to ten thousand other black families in Newark.

ANOTHER GIRL

And they all getting sick like us (LOUD AND VICIOUS) What in hell do you think is the matter wid my sister in the bed there? Dat dollar a day they give her don't make her much different from a slave. And she work all day. All day, dammit! When the sun rises and when it sets, she's working! For a dollar a day....cleaning a ten room house from top to bottom.

MANDY

You got to work. You got to work to live!

ANOTHER GIRL

Yeah! But while you working....you ought to be paid enough to buy food!

A GIRL (CALLING) Ma! Ma!

MANDY (SYMPATHETIC) What is it, daughter? What is it?

A GIRL I'm sick. I'm so sick, ma.

MANDY (SLOWLY) Daughter, you want me to telephone the hospital?

A GIRL (EXCITED) No, ma! No!

MANDY I got a nickle, honey.

A GIRL Ma! Please don't send me to that hospital! (SOBS) I been up there before.

1ST MINISTER Sister Mandy, don't you think you ought to send for a doctor?

MANDY Reverend, I done sent for the doctor. And he already come. The doctor done been here, Reverend!

1ST MINISTER But sister, didn't the doctor do nothing ~~for~~ for your daughter?

MANDY Yaas sir. He done all he could!

1ST MINISTER What doctor was it?

MANDY It was a colored doctor. (CRYING) He done all he could for my daughter. And he know he ain't gonna git no pay for it. He know he ain't. He stay here wid her nearly all night last night.

1ST MINISTER Sister, please!

MANDY I can't hep weeping, Reverend. I can't hep it.

1ST MINISTER What did the doctor say?

MANDY He say he done done all he could. And then he say my child ought to go to the hospital.

1ST MINISTER Did he mean the City Hospital?

ANOTHER GIRL Yeah! To the City Hospital. Where they put all the colored folks together so they can really be mean to 'em!

MANDY I told the colored doctor they was mean to our people in that place.

A GIRL Ma! I don't want to go to that place.

1ST MINISTER All the colored people in town is feeling that way about that place. It's a sin and a shame.

ANOTHER GIRL What you gonna do about it? (SNORTS) Nothing! You'll preach the same sermon next Sunday as you preached last Sunday....and all the Sundays before that.

BOOTBLACK And then take Ma's hard earned money....for saying nothing!

1ST MINISTER If they only had colored doctors up at that City Hospital. Maybe they could sort of look after their own.

ANOTHER GIRL But they ain't got no colored doctors up there! And they say they ain't gonna let none come up there! And what you gonna do about it? Nothing!

BOOTBLACK I know what I'm gonna do! I'm gonna grow up and git myself a army! Yeah! And then they'll be....

RED CAP (INTERRUPTS BY SLAPPING BOOTBLACK) Shut your mouth

BOOTBLACK (WHIPS OUT SWITCHBLADE KNIFE) You ain't gonna slap me!

MANDY (SCREAMS)

RED CAP (TO BOOTBLACK) Put that knife up! (PAUSE) Put that knife up!

BOOTBLACK You can't be slapping me!

RED CAP Put up that knife!

BOOTBLACK If you wasn't my brother....I'd cut your guts out!

RED CAP Put up that knife! (PAUSE) Put up that knife....
boy!

(BOOTBLACK, GLARING AT RED CAP,
SLOWLY FOLDS KNIFE AND PUTS IT
IN HIS POCKET.)

A GIRL Oh Ma! Ma! Ma!

MANDY (SYMPATHETIC) Daughter. Daughter.

1ST MINISTER (LOUD) Listen you-all! Listen! There's a lot
to be settled here. A lot to be settled! But
the sick got to be taken care of first!

ANOTHER GIRL I ain't much of a Christian....but I'm sho-god
gonna say amen to that!

1ST MINISTER (TO 2ND PORTER) You go call the ambulance!

A GIRL (SITTING UP IN BED TERRIFIED) Oh god, no! Ma,
don't let 'em take me! They'll just let me lay
there. If I call for help, they'll pass me bye!
And if I keep on calling, they'll just be brutal
to me!

MANDY She's telling you right, Reverend. That's the
truth!

1ST MINISTER Listen to me! I ain't been much of a preacher in
my time. I ain't been saying much in my sermons.
And I been doing less. But dis is one thing I'm
gonna do. And I'm gonna tell you how.

MANDY We listening, Reverend.

1ST MINISTER A minister of God kin go into a hospital whenever
he wants to!

2ND PORTER I'm going after the ambulance! (EXITS RIGHT)

1ST MINISTER And dat means I kin go up to dat hospital day or night. And when dey take dis daughter there, I'm gonna build me a nest in a chair by her bed. And I'm gonna roost there....until Gabe blow his horn, if I have too. And I'm gonna make sure that every hand that touches dis child's body is a gentle hand! Do you hear me?!

RED CAP They'll throw you out, Reverend.

1ST MINISTER Dey'll have to build a cross and nail me on it first!

ANOTHER GIRL Aw glory! Aw now you talking!

RED CAP Yeah Lawd! And if the rest of the preachers would talk like that....they'd have to build more church

1ST MINISTER And dat ain't all! My talking ain't started yet! Something's got to be done in dis town! There's plenty of good people in it! Good people, both white and black. Right now, I'm gonna find the black ones and talk to them. The ones dat's got more brains than I have. The ones that can talk and write good English.

RED CAP Them kind of colored folks in this town is few. And most of 'em is scared to speak up for people like us!

1ST MINISTER I'll tell 'em what's happening to us! I'll tell 'em it won't be long before it happens to them! (POINTS AT BOOTBLACK) Look at that boy there! All the young ones is talking and acting like Him.

RED CAP Yeah! All this town is doing is spawning a batch of little black Hitlers!

ANOTHER GIRL They won't git far though! The white folks will stop 'em! But quick! (LAUGHS) Yeah! But look what they've made out of me!

BOOTBLACK Tell 'em, sis!

ANOTHER GIRL Yeah! Dey filled me full of poison. And I'm walking wid it. I walk wid it at night when the cars drive up to the dark alleys 'round here! The cars wid there sons and brothers and husbands in it! Den I take 'em in my arms. And let 'em drown in my poison!

RED CAP Shut up! You're crazy!

ANOTHER GIRL You mean: I'm the only one among you kin fight back!

RED CAP Make her shut up, Reverend! For god-sake!, make her hush! She's crazy!

1ST MINISTER (KINDLY, GENTLY) Hush, daughter. Hush, all of you. There ain't but one thing on my mind now. And that's this: There's two girls in this would-be home that's sick. And there're people 'round here with the knowledge to hep 'em. But they ain't allowed to hep 'em. Now what we gonna do about it?

RED CAP The Negroes, few as they are, what's got a little is scared of losing it, if it means helping their brothers like us!

A GIRL Oh Ma! I'm sick, sick, sick.

MANDY Yes, daughter! You heard what Reverend said. He gonna do all he kin for you.

1ST MINISTER Yeah. There's a lot wrong here in this town. But we got to take care of our sick first. And that means we got to let the people....all the peopleknow what's happening to our sick.

2ND PORTER (ENTERS FROM RIGHT AS MINISTER IS SPEAKING ABOVE LINES) I done telephoned for the ambulance. You know what they asked me?

1ST MINISTER What, son? What did they ask you?

2ND PORTER Is the patient white or colored?

1ST MINISTER Did they really ask you that?

2ND PORTER Over that telephone....just now....they asked me was my sister white or colored!

ANOTHER GIRL And when she gits to the hospital....there won't be a single colored doctor or a single colored nurse to hep take care of her!

1ST MINISTER Hear me, Lawd! Listen to me, you-all! By all that's decental in the name of Humanity, this is one time I'm gonna ask folks in this town to gimme some answers!

SOUND OFF IN THE DISTANCE A SIREN.

BOOTBLACK. Here come the ambulance. I hear the siren!

1ST MINISTER Let it come, son. But right now, I want to know two things: Is justice dead? And if it is....why don't they bury it so it don't stink?

SOUND SIREN IN LOUD. FADE LIGHTS. CURTAIN. SIREN.

(HOUSE LIGHTS UP)